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HIGHLIGHTS FROM MARKET NEWS REVIEWS

Week ending March 16, 1945

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

Asparagus - Early spring acreage in the Western Region has been estimated at 75,840 acres from which there is expected to be harvested this coming season a crop of 7,748,000 crates, about 96 percent of the total spring crop in the United States. First to mature for harvest is that from California. With the approach of warmer weather, carload shipments are expected to be moving inter-state by the first of next week. The present season is about three weeks behind the 1944 season because of cold weather and frosts.

Further price declines during the week brought top wholesale prices down to 45 cents per pound. The range on Extra Fancy at the close of the week was 25 cents to 45 cents per pound. Green stock predominated.

Carrots - The market for Arizona and California carrots improved as the week drew to a close. Fob prices on Friday were \$2.00 to \$2.25 per crate of 6 dozen bunches, medium to large stock. Medium to small sold 25 cents to 30 cents lower. Market conditions in Texas, where there was a heavy increase in acreage, continued weak with little demand. Responsibility appears to rest on the present poor condition of the tops on Texas carrots. Top wholesale prices on the Pacific Coast ranged \$3.50 to \$4.00 for Imperial Valley, California stock.

Lettuce - Little change took place in fob prices from the previous week. Demand has been above available supplies. Arizona supplies have increased and Monterey County, California stock should soon be moving. Past week's shipments totaled 1,157 cars, a 6 percent increase over the previous week.

Potatoes - Shipments from Idaho have decreased the past week, while those from Maine, North Dakota and Minnesota have been increased; the first because of light remaining supplies, and the second because of increased efforts being made to move the remaining old crop supplies before the new crop harvest. Total carlot movement in the U.S. was 226,696 cars at the close of the week, compared with 245,633 cars at the same time last year. Total for the season last year was 285,472 cars.

Wholesale prices continue to hold at ceiling. Effective March 17th to April 20th the price ceiling on Texas potatoes has been increased to \$5.40 per cwt.

Oranges - First place in the movement of oranges the past week goes to Florida with approximately two thirds of the 2,444 cars for the U.S. originating in that state. Western Region wholesale prices remained about the same as for the previous week.

DAIRY AND POULTRY PRODUCTS

Eggs - Daily receipts increased during the past week, but demand in most of the markets remained in excess of supply of the better grades. Dealers showed strong tendency to build up storage holdings where possible. Cold storage holdings on the Pacific Coast remained 40 percent under holdings for the same period last year.



Butter - Increased set-aside announced by WFA the past week was 40 percent in April, and 55 percent in May. Production continued to increase, but was still under last year by about 8 percent for the West Coast. Civilian supplies the next two months may be shorter than the previous month. In contrast, some of the large retail stores on the East Coast advertised butter in local papers, indicating they had sufficient butter for one pound per customer.

Poultry - Light receipts of poultry, and consequently short supplies, characterized all the western markets the past week. Purchasing at country points was strong, and there was active competition among dealers for supplies. Dressing plants in many places found it difficult to remain operating.

#### LIVESTOCK AND MEATS

Cattle - Movement into the four western markets was 2 percent heavier the past week than the week previous, and on the twelve principal markets were equal to those of the previous week. Totals: West 19,182 head, twelve markets 222,300 head. Receipts on the twelve principal markets were 80 percent greater the past week than for the same week a year ago.

Demand continued well above available receipts, and prices closed the week 25 cents to 50 cents higher on most stock than at the opening of the week.

Hogs - Supplies of hogs reaching the markets were again lighter than for the previous week. The four western markets received 9,496 head, and the twelve principal markets 196,400 head, the latter being but 39 percent of receipts for the twelve markets last year at this same time.

Demand was above receipts on both the wholesale and retail markets, and prices remained at ceiling.

Sheep - Receipts of sheep on the twelve principal markets the past week were 213,100 head, less than 1 percent change from the previous week but about 7 percent greater than the same week last year. On the four western markets receipts were up to 17,443 head. Prices advanced as much as 25 cents, and in San Francisco were as high as the lamb prices of March and April of 1929.

#### GRAIN PRODUCTS

Wheat - Growing conditions for winter wheat continued favorable in most of the Western Region. Demand on the markets was mostly centered on high protein hard wheats, particularly from Montana. Freight space shortages appeared responsible for the present small supplies on the West Coast. Car shortage and recent active export outlook have held prices at ceiling.

Barley - Recent rains in the western barley sections have proved beneficial, and the early crops are showing improvement.

Supplies in the hands of dealers and producers on the West Coast continue light. Demand in most of the area was urgent, with offerings very light. Prices moved up 2 to 2½ cents per 100 pounds.

Alfalfa - Rains the past few days which have helped other crops have slowed the harvesting of the early alfalfa crops in California, particularly in the upper San Joaquin Valley, the Antelope Valley and Imperial Valley. Sales on #1 Leafy stock baled and at the ranch were mostly \$21 to \$23 per ton for Kern County, and in Imperial Valley \$23 and \$24 per ton.

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